

Appl. No.: 09/807,165
Group Art Unit: 1714
Applicants' Reply to Paper No. 7

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 6, 15 and 25, and cancel claims 7 and 10, without prejudice, as shown below in the following complete listing of all claims ever presented. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the instant application:

Claims 1-5 (Canceled):

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A composition comprising granules containing at least one plastic additive, wherein the granules are substantially spherical and have a diameter of from 0.5 to 5 mm ~~the granules having a length-to-diameter ratio of 1:1 to 3:1.~~

Claim 7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules have a diameter of from 0.8 to 3 mm.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules have a uniform size and shape.

Claim 10 (Canceled)

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules have a length-to-diameter ratio of 1:1.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The composition according to claim 6, wherein the at least one plastic additive comprises a component selected from the group consisting of lubricants, stabilizers, and mixtures thereof.

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Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The composition according to claim 12, wherein the component is selected from the group consisting of calcium soaps, zinc soaps, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules are substantially spherical and have a diameter of from 0.8 to 3 mm, and wherein the at least one plastic additive comprises a component selected from the group consisting of calcium soaps, zinc soaps, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A granular composition prepared by a process comprising:

(a) providing cylindrical granules of a composition containing at least one plastic additive; and

(b) spheronizing the cylindrical granules to form substantially spherical granules having a diameter of from 0.5 to 5 mm ~~length to diameter ratio of from 1:1 to 3:1.~~

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 15, wherein providing the cylindrical granules comprises: (i): extruding a composition containing at least one plastic additive into a fine strand; and (ii): cutting the fine strand into cylindrical granules.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 16, wherein the composition is extruded using a twin-screw extruder.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 17, wherein the composition is extruded at a temperature of from 20 to 110°C and a pressure of from 25 to 60 bar.

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Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 15, wherein spheronizing is accomplished using a spheronizer having a rotating bottom disk.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 19, wherein spheronizing is performed at a rotational speed of 320 rpm with a residence time of 30 seconds.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 15, wherein the process further comprises impregnating the granules with an additional active substance.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 21, wherein impregnating the granules with an additional active substance is accomplished via surface-powdering.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 22, wherein the surface powdering is carried out at least partly during spheronizing.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The granular composition according to claim 18, wherein spheronizing is carried out using a spheronizer having a rotating bottom disk operating at a rotational speed of 320 rpm with a residence time of 30 seconds; and the process further comprises impregnating the granules with an additional active substance.

Claim 25 (**Currently Amended**): A method of stabilizing a plastic composition during processing, said method comprising:

(a) providing a plastic composition;

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(b) providing a granular composition comprising granules containing at least one plastic additive, wherein the granules are substantially spherical and have a diameter of from 0.5 to 5 mm ~~the granules having a length-to-diameter ratio of from 1:1 to 3:1; and~~

(c) combining the plastic composition and the granular composition prior to processing completion.